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ERDC unveiling for new facility

The Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory (CHL) of the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) in Vicksburg, Miss., will host an unveiling ceremony on Thursday, Oct. 3 to celebrate the start of construction for a new 56,000 square foot building addition to its present headquarters building.

In 1996, the U.S. Army Engineer Coastal Engineering Research Center and Hydraulics Laboratory merged to form the Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory. Although this merger consolidated laboratory functions, personnel remained in separate locations. The multi-story building created by the addition will serve as the single office building for all CHL employees.

The ceremony will begin at 1 p.m. in the CHL main conference room and will include an unveiling of the artist's rendition of the addition. Dr. James Houston, director of ERDC, will serve as Master of Ceremonies for the ceremony. ERDC's Commander, Col. John Morris, and the Vicksburg District's Commander, Col. Rick Clapp, will be guest speakers.

The new \$6.9 million facility is expected to be completed in February 2004. Brashears, Inc., an 8a minority firm from Madison, Miss., has been awarded the contract for this new addition based on the design-build procurement strategy. An 8a firm is one that has been certified by the Small Business Administration to participate in

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ERDC ground breaking, add one SBA's Minority Enterprise Development Programs as defined by Section 8 of the Small Business Act.

While the design-build strategy is frequently used in the commercial industry and for military construction, the CHL will be the largest design-build project in the Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program. The Vicksburg District provides all contracting services to ERDC and is responsible for this innovative contracting tool. The district will also be responsible for design review and construction management as the contractor proceeds. Through this process, the Vicksburg District on behalf of ERDC and the Corps hopes to realize significant benefits, including the reduction of design costs and fewer change orders during construction. In essence, the design-build approach will provide CHL with the best possible design and structure for the best value.

CHL is one of seven laboratories that comprise the ERDC. Established in 1929 to study flood control measures, CHL is the oldest ERDC laboratory and continues to lead the way in research efforts for water resources projects across the nation. The ERDC, the premier research and development facility for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, employs more than 2,000 people, is made up of \$1.2 billion in facilities, and conducts an annual research program exceeding \$550 million. It conducts research in both military and civil works mission areas for the Department of Defense and the nation.

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